

find its way out of this mess until we spend more time helping each other than we do suing each other.

We've got to also reform our health care system. Anyone who's had even a checkup knows that medical costs are going right through the roof. And I believe all Americans deserve quality health care. However, too many families go without health care coverage. And our plan focuses on opening up access to health care to all Americans, rich or poor. And some want to take us down the road of nationalized health care, and I think you and I both know that nationalized health care where Government makes all the decisions would be a national disaster. And so I say to the Congress, the Congress of the United States: The American people need your help, and now is not the time for the Government to play doctor. Give us an improved health care program for this country.

I'd like them to do it now. But see, I know Congress can be a little slow doing things. [Laughter] That's like the guy that takes an hour and a half to watch "60 Minutes." [Laughter] So I gave them a deadline, March 20th, to enact this short-term plan. And unfortunately for the American people, the Democrats, the liberals that control the Congress, had other ideas. Last week they passed a plan of their own. And here's what it does: In exchange for a two-bit tax cut, literally about 25 cents a day per taxpayer, they will raise another \$100 billion in taxes. And they call that \$100 billion new revenues. And I have another word for it: your money. [Laughter]

No matter how the the Democrats try to dress it up, any economist can tell you the last thing we need right now is a \$100 billion tax hike. So if the Democrats in Con-

gress want to send that bill to me, I've got a message for them: I will veto it, absolutely, positively, overnight.

No, the American people have had enough of the old tax-and-spend, and they want to get our economy back on track. And every day each one of you hears Federal Express airplanes flying overhead. To some people that might sound like noise, but it is music to my ears. It is the sound of an economy on the move, an economy that is worldwide. It is the sound of American ingenuity taking off.

Since I took office, it has been my responsibility to work for what is right for America. And I often go back, I expect we all do as families—and I wish Barbara Bush were with me to see this marvelous crowd today—we often go back to the simple ideal that in our case, that my parents taught me: Try your hardest. Be honest. Do your best. And let me tell you something: I'm not finished yet. I want your support for 4 more years to finish this job. And I say to the people of Tennessee, together we're going to make a change, a change that for once Congress will believe in you and give you values you believe in, give those values a real chance to work.

Thank you for your hard work. Thank you all for this enthusiastic welcome and your continued support. And may God bless the greatest, freest country on the face of the Earth, the United States of America. Thank you so much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at Memphis International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Frederick W. Smith, chairman and chief executive officer of Federal Express.

Statement on Signing the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991

March 5, 1992

Today I am signing into law H.R. 355, the "Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991." This bill provides, for a period of 10 years, general authority for

the Secretary of the Interior to take action in the Western States to protect and preserve

fish and wildlife habitat and assist farmers and urban dwellers in overcoming drought conditions. In addition, the bill provides permanent authority for the Secretary to prepare drought contingency plans in consultation with States, Indian tribes, and other entities for the prevention or mitigation of the adverse effects of drought conditions.

As I sign this bill, some areas in our Western States, notably in California, are facing their 6th consecutive year of drought conditions. The authorities granted by this bill will allow the Federal Government greater flexibility in utilizing the facilities of the Federal reclamation program and the resources of the Department of the Interior to assist the States and other non-Federal entities fighting the ravages of drought. This bill allows us to be the good neighbors that we should be in time of common need. It is in the American tradition that neighbor helps neighbor in times of burden. We will not stand by and see either our local economies and jobs literally “dried up” by drought or our valuable refuges and wetlands parched by lack of water.

We are fortunate that, in the last few weeks, the water supply situation in California has improved. So I am pleased to announce that today Secretary Lujan will make available additional allocations of more than 1 million acre feet of water. This will enable us to deliver project water to agriculture in the Central Valley—without sacrificing *any* allocations provided for other uses. This is only a first step—but a very positive one for California agriculture. I have asked Secretary Lujan to continue to assess the water supply situation and to keep me informed of any opportunity to provide additional Federal water where it

is needed.

I note, however, that section 204(a) purports to require that the Secretary of the Interior submit certain drought contingency plans to the Congress, together with the Secretary’s recommendations for legislation. The Constitution grants to the President the power to recommend to the Congress such measures as he judges necessary and expedient. Thus, provisions such as the one contained in this bill have been treated as advisory and not mandatory. I will therefore interpret section 204(a) accordingly.

Section 204(b), which purports to allow the Secretary of the Interior to approve certain drought contingency plans only at the request of the Governor of the affected State, could be construed to permit the exercise of Executive power by Governors, who are not appointed pursuant to the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. In order to avoid constitutional questions that might otherwise arise, I will interpret the role of Governors under this provision to be an advisory one.

I also note that the Department of Agriculture conducts drought contingency planning and administers drought assistance programs in agricultural areas. New planning and technical assistance activities initiated by the Department of the Interior will of course be coordinated with the Department of Agriculture and other affected departments and agencies.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
March 5, 1992.

Note: H.R. 355, approved March 5, was assigned Public Law No. 102–250.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Kissimmee Basin Restoration Project

March 5, 1992

The President is pleased to announce that the Federal Government has reached in principle agreement with the State of Flor-

ida to restore a major portion of the lower Kissimmee Basin. The project envisioned would restore 66 miles of river and 29,000